

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 13209 101508Z

43

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET

SUBJECT: ANGOLAN RECOGNITION

REF: STATE 265503

1. SUMMARY. EPMG HAS BEEN APPROACHING ANGOLAN INDEPENDENCE VERY CAUTIOUSLY AND ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL WILL GO SLOWLY ON RECOGNITION MATTER IN HOPES THAT WITHHOLDING RECOGNITION WOULD SERVE PURPOSE OF EXERTING DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE ON ALL THREE ANGOLAN GROUPS TO RESOLVE UNITY PROBLEM. EPMG WILL NOT HOLD OUT HOWEVER IF 90 PERCENT OF AFRICAN NATIONS ELECT TO RECOGNIZE MPLA GOVERNMENT. EPMG HOPES THAT EXTERNAL POWERS WILL REFRAIN FROM INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLAN AFFAIR AND INTER ALIA "REQUESTS" THAT US REFRAIN FROM QUICK RECOGNITION OF ANY OF THE THREE GROUPS. EPMG SEES ANGOLA AS POTENTIALLY LONG DRAWN OUT AFFAIR. TRANSFER OF POWER NOVEMBER 11 WILL BE BASICALLY "SYMBOLIC" HAVING LITTLE IMPACT ON ACTUAL SITUATION EXCEPT TO REMOVE PORTUGUESE FROM EQUATION. END SUMMARY.

2. DCM DISCUSSED ANGOLAN SITUATION PER REFTEL WITH ASSEFA LEGESSE, ACTING DIRECTOR FOR AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS IN MOFA ON NOVEMBER 10. AFTER LISTENING CAREFULLY, ASSEFA REPLIED THAT WE SEEM TO HAVE SEVERAL POINTS IN COMMON. HE SAID EPMG HAS BEEN APPROACHING ANGOLAN PROBLEM
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PAGE 02 ADDIS 13209 101508Z

VERY CAUTIOUSLY AND INTENDED GO SLOW ON MATTER OF RECOG-

NITION. EPMG FRANKLY PREFERS MPLA AS "ONLY TRUE LIBERATION MOVEMENT" IN ANGOLA IN SENSE THAT MPLA FORCES HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN FIGHTING PORTUGUESE WHILE OTHER TWO HAVE BEEN LARGELY FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES, BUT EPMG ALSO RECOGNIZES THAT NONE OF THE THREE REPRESENT MAJORITY OF ANGOLAN PEOPLE AND THAT FNLA/UNITA HAS BEEN GROWING IN STRENGTH RECENTLY. EPMG SEES ITS POSITION AS BEING IN LINE WITH WHAT IT UNDERSTANDS IS POSITION OF OAU CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARIAT. WHETHER EPMG WILL BE ABLE CONTINUE GO SLOW ON RECOGNITION, HOWEVER, MAY BE DIFFERENT MATTER. ASSEFA SAID HE THOUGHT MAJORITY OF OAU STATES WOULD RECOGNIZE MPLA, AND IF NUMBER GREW TOO LARGE, SAY 90 PERCENT, EPMG WOULD HAVE TO GO ALONG AS WELL, SINCE IT COULD NOT AFFORD TO BE THE LAST AFRICAN TO RECOGNIZE.

3. EPMG HOPES THAT EXTERNAL POWERS WILL REFRAIN FROM INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLAN PROBLEM. INTER ALIA, HE HOPED USG WOULD REFRAIN FROM QUICK RECOGNITION OF ANY OF THE THREE ANGOLAN GROUPS. HE ALSO WELCOMED AMIN'S REPORTED THREAT TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS IN SAME CONTEXT. SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT IN HIS VIEW WAS BEING OVERPLAYED IN SOME QUARTERS. ETHIOPIA DOUBTED THAT SOUTH AFRICANS WERE MUCH INVOLVED SINCE THEY HAD SUFFICIENT PROBLEMS IN NAMIBIA AND IN ANY CASE HAD TO THINK OF THEIR RELATIONS WITH MOZAMBIQUE. BUT USING SOUTH AFRICAN THREAT WAS CONVENIENT DEVICE BEING USED BY CERTAIN AFRICANS TO RALLY SUPPORT FOR MPLA.

4. ASSEFA THOUGHT THE TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY NOV. 11 WOULD BE LARGELY "SYMBOLIC" IN THAT BASIS PROBLEMS INVOLVING THE THREE GROUPS WOULD STILL BE THERE DAY AFTER AND WERE LIKELY BE SO FOR A LONG TIME. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT OAU WOULD PURSUE ITS EFFORTS RESTORE PEACE AND INSURE ORDERLY TRANSFER OF SOVEREIGNTY AND INDICATED EPMG'S HOPE THAT NEXT MOVE WOULD BE MEETING OF OAU FONMINS VERY SOON TO ADDRESS PROBLEM. HE DID NOT THINK THAT ACT OF TRANSFERRING POWER NOV. 11 INHIBITED OAU FROM CONTINUING TO TRY AND RESOLVE PROBLEM. APART FROM CEREMONIAL ASPECTS WHICH HE THOUGHT MIGHT BE VERY SHORT, PRINCIPAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NOV. 11 WOULD BE WITHDRAWAL OF PORTUGAL FROM EQUATION WHICH

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ADDIS 13209 101508Z

HE THOUGHT TO BE A GOOD THING.

5. ASSEFA VOLUNTEERED THAT HE DOUBTED VERY MUCH ETHIOPIAN PARTICIPATION IN ANY OAU DEFENSE FORCE WITHER IN FORM OF CONTINGENT OF TROOPS OR VOLUNTEERS, AND REITERATED HIS HOPE FOR A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION USING NON-RECOGNITION AS A DIPLOMATIC WEAPON TO BRING ANGOLAN GROUPS AROUND. IF DIPLOMACY DIDN'T WORK, HE SAID HIS OWN PERSONAL PREFERENCE

WAS TO LET THE THREE GROUPS FIGHT IT OUT EVEN IF THIS TOOK
A LONG TIME.

6. COMMENT: ASSEFA SAID HE WOULD LET US KNOW IF EPMG'S
POSITION CHANGED, AS HE ADMITTED IT COULD UNDER HEAVY
AFRICAN PRESSURE. MEANWHILE IT WAS CLEAR THAT FOR PRESENT,
ETHIOPIA WAS TAKING LONG VIEW OF EVENTS IN ANGOLA OF
WHICH TRANSFER OF POWER ON NOV. 11 WAS ONLY ONE DEVELOP-
MENT, AND WAS HOPING THAT IN TIME OAU, WITH SUPPORT OF
SUCH COUNTRIES AS ETHIOPIA, MIGHT BRING ABOUT SOLUTION
THAT REPRESENTED WISHES OF MAJORITY OF ANGOLANS.
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